

Message Text

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USCINCEUR

CHIEF OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS NAVY WASHDC

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SUBJECT: CODEL SCOTT'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ASAD AUGUST 12

1. SUMMARY: SENATOR SCOTT MET WITH PRESIDENT ASAD EVENING AUGUST 12. PRESIDENT ASSURED CODEL THAT SYRIA WANTED "REAL" PEACE AND MADE SEVEN POINTS BEARING ON PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR PEACE. ASAD STRESSED SYRIAN REFUSAL TO SURRENDER "ONE INCH" OF TERRITORY. END SUMMARY

2. SENATOR SCOTT HAD CORDIAL NINETY MINUTE MEETING WITH ASAD EVENING AUGUST 12. STATED HE HAD COME TO SYRIA AT REQUEST CHAIRMAN, ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, ON FACT FINDING MISSION AND HOPED THAT PRESIDENT WOULD SHARE WITH HIM HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT AREA'S FUTURE. PRESIDENT TOLD CODEL HE WELCOMED VISITS BY US OFFICIALS IN VIEW OF US SUPER POWER STATUS AND ITS MAJOR INTERESTS IN NEAR EAST AREA. ASSURED SENATOR SYRIA WANTED "REAL" PEACE, ZIONIST PROPAGANDA TO CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING. SENATOR ACKNOWLEDGED HIS AWARENESS OF SUCH PROPAGANDA BUT ASSURED PRESIDENT THAT SENATE AND ITS ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE WERE NOT ZIONIST PUPPETS BUT WANTED SECURE US INTERESTS AND

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PEACE IN THE AREA.

3. SENATOR OBSERVED PALESTINIAN QUESTION SEEMED TO BE CENTRAL TO PROBLEM AND ASKED ABOUT THAT AND OTHER OBSTACLES TO PEACE. PRESIDENT REPLIED OBSTACLE WAS THAT FIRST ISRAEL WAS OCCUPYING LAND IN SYRIA AND EGYPT BEYOND HISTORICAL FRONTIERS OF PALESTINE. THIS WAS AGAINST UN CHARTER AND SYRIA SOUGHT APPLICATION OF CHARTER PRINCIPLES. SECONDLY, ISRAEL HAD OCCUPIED PALESTINE IN STAGES, FIRST IN 1948 AND THEN IN 1967, EACH TIME DISPLACING MAJOR NUMBERS OF PALESTINIANS. SENATOR ASKED IF ISRAEL CEASED OCCUPYING LANDS OF OTHER COUNTRIES COULD IT FEEL SECURE? WOULD IT NOT BE RISKING ATTACK BY ITS NEIGHBORS? PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT IF NATIONS SOUGHT THEIR SECURITY THROUGH OCCUPYING TERRITORIES OF OTHERS THIS WOULD BE RETURN TO LAW OF THE JUNGLE. "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS GUARANTOR OF SECURITY THESE DAYS, NOT ONE NATION OCCUPYING TERRITORY OF ITS NEIGHBOR." ASAD STRESSED THAT OCCUPATION IS NO GUARANTEE AGAINST ATTACKS ON ISRAEL BY EGYPT OR SYRIA AND THAT POSSIBILITY OF SUCH ATTACK, IF OCCUPATION CONTINUES, WILL BE GREATER THAN IF ISRAEL WITH-DRAWS. PRESIDENT ARGUED THAT DEMAND FOR SECURE BORDERS "HAD BECOME AN OUT-OF-DATE MYTH IN ERA OF MODERN WEAPONRY." ISRAEL, ASAD OBSERVED, UNDERSTANDS PEACE TO BE MERELY STATE OF QUIETUDE AND STABILITY, JUST ENDING THE WAR WHILE CONTINUING OCCUPATION OF TERRITORIES OF OTHERS AND KEEPING PALESTINIANS AWAY FROM THEIR LAND. (COMMENT: SENATOR COMMENTED TO AMBASSADOR LATER THAT ISSUE OF FUTURE ISRAELI SECURITY HAD BEEN ONLY POINT IN INTERVIEW ON WHICH HE FELT ASAD WAS EVASIVE.)

3. SENATOR AGREED WITH THESIS THAT PEACE MUST BE BASED ON UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN NATIONS INVOLVED AND THAT ANOTHER WAR WAS MORE LIKELY SHOULD OCCUPATION BE PERPETUATED. NOTING THAT GOOD WILL MUST BE BUILT UP AND THAT SOLUTION MAY TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME, CODEL ASKED WHAT ASAD BELIEVED TO BE A MEANINGFUL PEACE BETWEEN SYRIA, THE ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL. ASAD REPLIED RESTORATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES IS OBVIOUS ITEM NEEDING ATTENTION. SECONDLY, AT RABAT ARABS HAD AGREED THAT THE PLO WOULD BE THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. SATISFACTION OF THESE TWO DEMANDS WILL LEAD TO PEACE IN THE AREA. ARABS CANNOT GIVE UP ONE INCH OF THEIR OCCUPIED LANDS AND THE PLO IS THE ONLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF DEFINING PALZSTINIAN RIGHTS.

4. ASKED IF HE HAD ANY FURTHER POINTS HE WISHED SENATOR RELAY TO THE AFSC, THE PRESIDENT ANSWERED

A. THE US HAS FURNISHED ISREAL AN UNREASONABLE AMOUNT OF ARMS.

B. ISRAEL CONTINUES TO MISLEAD USG THROUGH ITS PROPAGANDA. IT, FOR EXAMPLE HAS CIRCULATED GROSSLY INFLATED ACCOUNTS OF ARMS FURNISHED SYRIA BY USSR AFTER THE OCTOBER WAR.

SENATOR RECALLED ISRAELI DEFMIN PERES TELLING HIM THAT WHILE SYRIA HAS RECEIVED THE MOST MODERN AIRCRAFT FROM USSR, US IS UNWILLING TO PROVIDE ISRAEL WITH ITS LATEST MODELS. PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT ISRAELI AIR FORCE WAS ALREADY 50 PERCENT LARGER THAN BEFORE OCTOBER WAR WHILE SYRIA'S HAD INCREASED ONLY 10 PERCENT. PRIME MINISTER RABIN HAD ACKNOWLEDGED ISRAELI TANK STRENGTH NOW 50 PERCENT GREATER THAN PRE-OCTOBER WAR. SYRIA BELIEVED IT WAS IN FACT EVEN HIGHER BUT, AS US INTELLIGENCE COULD CONFIRM, SYRIAN TANK FORCES HAD INCREASED ONLY FIVE PERCENT.

C. ARMING ISRAEL TO THE DEGREE THAT US HAS DONE HAS HINDERED MOVEMENT TOWARDS PEACE. US INFLUENCE ON ISRAEL HAS BEEN DIMINISHED.

D. AS LONG AS ISRAEL FEELS IT CAN GET ALL IT NEEDS FROM THE US WITHOUT MAKING ANY CONCESSIONS, ISRAEL WILL NOT WORK FOR A JUST PEACE IN THE AREA.

E. SYRIA WANTS ITS RELATIONS WITH THE US TO IMPROVE FROM "GOOD" TO TRUE FRIENDSHIP. IF THE US ADOPTS A FIRM STAND FOR PEACE IT WILL HELP BUILD THIS FRIENDSHIP WHICH WILL BE IN OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS.

F. IN ANY CASE SYRIA WILL NOT SURRENDER ONE INCH OF ITS LANDS NO MATTER HOW MANY WARS ARE NEEDED. IT HAS NO INTEREST IN A PEACE WHICH WOULD PERPETUATE SITUATION OF OCCUPATION AND/OR DISPLACED POPULATION.

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G. "WE WANT TO LIVE AN INDEPENDENT LIFE AND OUR DECISIONS WILL BE BASED ON OUR NATIONAL WILL AND INTERESTS."

5. SENATOR CONCLUDED HE HOPED THAT AGREEMENTS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE PARTIES COULD BE ACHIEVED. IT WAS NOT AMERICA'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS OF PEACE ON ANY COUNTRY. NOTED THAT OVER THE CENTURIES SYRIA HAD BEEN OPPRESSED AND SUFFERED FROM ARRANGEMENTS IMPOSED FROM OUTSIDE. NOW SYRIA MUST DECIDE AS TO WHAT ARRANGEMENTS IT CAN BE HAPPY WITH BUT TO ACHIEVE THIS WILL INVOLVE COMPROMISE.
MURPHY

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